

RECOLLECTIONS OF A READER

BY CHARLES T. CONGDON.

VII.

CURIOSITIES OF MEDICINE.

THE GREAT GALEN AND THE GALENICALS—THE REVOLT OF THE EMPEROR HADRIAN—MOTOR CURE IN ANCIENT TIMES—THE QUEEN OF SWEDEN'S DOCTOR—MEDICINA FLAGELLATA—WILLIAM COBBETT AND DR. RUSH—JOHN WESLEY AS A MEDICAL PRACTITIONER—OUR OWN GOOD DOCTOR.

Perhaps I might begin this chapter by exclaiming: "In the name of Esculapius—pills!" which would be as sonorous as that other well-known Johnsonian anti-climax: "In the name of the prophet—figs!" For our sins, we are unfortunately familiar with modern medical practice, but the odd corners and crannies of ancient theory, with their lumber of loose empiricism, we know little about, because we have no occasion to know anything. We are content to be restored by modern remedies, and through the efficacy of modern prescriptions which we cannot read, without caring to investigate the obsolete absurdities. It is little to a sick man of to-day to learn what they swallowed in the middle ages for the same agonies; yet it might be amusing to a convalescent to beguile the tedium of recovery and to look over this little lot of rubbish which is before me. Nobody, I believe, has yet attempted in any language a History of Quackery, and perhaps it would not be easy to define precisely what quackery is. A quack is "an irregular practitioner," yet if Galen himself were to set up to-day in New-York as a doctor, and avow the belief which he undoubtedly entertained in the doctrine of critical days influenced by the moon, he would be regarded as a charlatan. He believed in amulets. Dr. Cullen thought him to be the inventor of the amydine necklace, which was long worn in England, something like it being still advertised in this country with magnetic virtues claimed for it. Yet Galen was for ages thought to be infallible. So late as 1550, the London College of Physicians was about to turn out a member, Dr. Geynes, for impugning his authority. But the poor doctor ate humble pie, went down upon his knees, repented his error, and was graciously permitted still to write himself of the College.

I do not believe that a more entertaining book could be written than one which should treat of the History of Medicine, and especially of ancient medicine. There would be no end of curious and amusing things in it, and of matters not unconnected with the gravest events. There was the end, for instance, of Hadrian, the most indefatigable, restless, and tireless of the Roman Emperors. When he retired utterly broken down to Baiae, the wreck of a hundred campaigns, he was pleased to attribute his approaching death to the doctors. He formally announced that he would have nothing more to do with them, would take no more of their potions and pills, and, by the gods! would hereafter eat what he pleased and drink what he pleased. Such was the conclusion to which the conqueror of the Jews came, at the age of sixty-two. Everybody has read his dying address to his soul (*animula vagula blandula*) in the pretty paraphrase of Mr. Pope. The doctors banished from Baiae doubtless thought it to be a composition of mediocre merit.

Ten Jenson says that "oft taking physic makes a man very patient"; I hope that my readers will be patient with me, though they are sound in health, and have long escaped the penalty of prescriptions. Medical history sometimes reminds me of Solomon's remark that there is nothing new under the sun. Who would think, for instance, that what we call the motor-cure was tried ages ago under the name of *Ptyalism*? The Greek who submitted to this treatment walked on tip-toe, stretching his hands high above his head as he could, keeping the whole body also as much upon the stretch as might be. In this condition the patient was to walk as far as he was well able, all the while moving about both his hands as much as possible in all directions. Here we have the protest against swallowing drugs which in these modern times has become strong. I read the other day of the pravengare which has been somewhat talked of in England. There were doctors who practised in that way several centuries ago. There was old Peter Krukenius in the sixteenth century, a professor at Upsal and Physician Extraordinary to the Queen of Sweden, of whom it is reported that he read the Bible through sixteen times from beginning to end. It is significantly stated that he expected nothing from remedies without the Divine assistance, and would not undertake the cure of patients who were not reconciled to God. There was a certain Asclepiades of Rome, toward the end of the second century, of whom it is recorded that, not unlike some modern physicians, he tried to make himself as agreeable as possible to his patients. He sought to make the sick chamber jolly, and his favorite prescription was wine. There is a story in Pliny about him which is greatly to the credit of his skill. One day he met a funeral. The mourners were howling. Relatives and friends who had been invited to attend without further notice were more or less drowned in tears. Dr. Asclepiades at once put an end to all that moist and lugubrious nonsense by giving his professional attention to the corpse, which under his manipulations got up and walked home smiling, surrounded by smiling friends, and greatly to the disgust of the hired and professional mourners who found their occupation gone. What he did to the remains is not known, but it is known that his three great remedies were exercise, abstinence, and the use of the flesh brush. I should have liked to have seen him briskly polishing the deceased. Dr. A. had such faith in his own theories that he laid a large wager that he him-

self, when sickness is in our house, when those whom we love are in danger or seem to be, when we are vegetating in the tedium of convalescence, comes in of a morning with a smile, and cheerfully radiating hope through all the chamber, talks to us of everything except our troubles, or speaks words of encouragement, or tells us at the last, as gently as he can, that we are no longer to hope for anything from his skill. How his visits are looked for! how reluctant we are to let him go! Ours is often a hard fortune, when all his science and curative instinct and faithful watchfulness have proved unavailing; but his, too, is at the same time a hard one. He would have done so much, and he has been able to do so little. The fierce malady with which he grappled has defied him; his resources are at an end; there is nothing in his books which can do any good, while pallid Death is knocking at the door. Let us think kindly of the Doctor in whom we so trust when we are ill and of whom we say such critical things when we are well!

MEDICAL AND SURGICAL NOTES.

BREATHING CARBONIC ACID.—The dangerous properties of carbonic oxide have long been known—an atmosphere which contains only a little of this gas may produce poisoning and death. Some exact experiments on this subject have now been described to the French Academy by M. Gremant. He concludes that a man, or one of the lower animals, compelled to breathe for half an hour in an atmosphere containing only 1.779% of carbonic oxide absorbs the gas in such quantity that about one-half of the red blood corpuscles combine with the gas and become incapable of absorbing oxygen; in an atmosphere containing 1.1449% of carbonic oxide about a fourth of the red corpuscles combine with this gas.

INFANTILE OPHTHALMIA.—In the *Rerum Medicamentorum*, Dr. Luton, of Kneims, advocates the use of iodine dissolved in cherry-laurel water, for ophthalmia in newborn infants. Ten drops of the tincture in ten grammes of cherry-laurel water make a colorless mixture, leaving no precipitate, while in the same quantity of distilled water a colored precipitate would soon form. The decoration is owing to the production of hydriodic acid and iodide of cyanogen, two colorless bodies in solution. A mixture of one part tincture of iodine to twenty parts of cherry laurel water is, says M. Luton, a collyrium of inconceivable power in the purulent ophthalmia of infants; the liquid to be dropped between the lids five or six times a day, besides external applications. In efficiency it is declared to be superior to nitrate of silver, while it is both painless and safe.

A NEW REVULSIVE.—Dr. Conturier, according to a London journal, recommends the use of a new revulsive obtained from an extract of red pepper. When rubbed up with any of the ordinary vehicles and spread on thin paper, it is readily employed in the same manner as blistering paper. The action of this revulsive is rapid—the skin soon becomes reddish, warm, and the seat of a prickling sensation; these symptoms continuing for about three hours, but never amounting to agony in the nature of pain, nor does the action of the revulsive extend to the surrounding skin. It may, in fact, be compared to a snapdragon, continuing to act equably for twenty-four hours, after having produced a mighty deal of heat. From the second given it further appears that this red pepper revulsive is indicated in all cases where the medical attendant desires to produce revulsion rapidly, and keep it up for a considerable time—in acute or chronic inflammation, for example, of the throat or bronchial tubes, in congestion of various organs, etc.

A few selections from the letters in Dr. Gibbs's book will best show their quality. The following was written by Frau Goethe to Lavater shortly after the death of her only daughter, Cornelia, and well exhibits the serious, tender and religious side of her character:

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

GOETHE'S MOTHER.

CORRESPONDENCE OF CATHERINE ELIZABETH GOETHE, with Goethe, Lavater, Wieland, Duchess Anna Amalia of Saxo-Weimar, Friedrich von Stein, and others. Translated from the German by ALFRED COCK. Pp. 265. New-York: Dodd, Mead & Co.

The translator and editor of these letters, a Philadelphia physician of fine literary taste and attractive social qualities, died before his book found a publisher. He was fortunate in enjoying the close friendship of Mr. Clarence Cook, who acts as his literary executor, and introduces the work and the author to the public in a graceful and sympathetic prefatory note to the reader. The letters were gathered from a variety of German sources, and have never before appeared in English. They afford interesting glimpses of the thought and character of one of the most cheerful and attractive figures in the literary life of the last century. Catharine Elizabeth Goethe was an admirable example of the best type of the cultivated German woman of her time. She was full of enthusiasm for literature, art, and especially for the drama, without being the least bit of a blue-stocking; she had a warm heart overflowing with love for her children and grandchildren, and with an affection for her friends, which separation never cooled; and she was at the same time an excellent housewife and had shrewd, practical views of the business and duties of life. Mr. Cook calls her "a Homeric woman, a mate for Andromache and Penelope," and coming nearer home to Shakespeare's world, he places her in memory's gallery side by side with Volumnia.

In German literature Frau von Goethe is universally known as Frau Rath, the title of a counsellor's wife, which rendered in literal English, would be Mrs. Counsellor. The title of Rath attaches to a variety of municipal and governmental offices in Germany, and Mrs. Counsellors are as plenty as blackberries, but Frau Rath Goethe is the Frau Rath par excellence in the heart of every cultivated German. Her household name, bestowed by her friends, and adopted by her, was Frau Aja. It came from a legend of Aja, a sister of Charlemagne, who entertained unaware her own sons disguised as pilgrims to avoid the anger of the Emperor, and went into the cellar to bring the best wine for them. The habit of Frau Goethe of drawing herself the choicest wine contained in her cedar and serving it to her guests with her own hands, recalled the legend and gained for her the name she bore in the circle of friends and relatives who were wont to gather in the spacious broad-fronted house, where the poet was born, which may still be seen in the Hirschgarten, in Frankfort.

A few selections from the letters in Dr. Gibbs's book will best show their quality. The following was written by Frau Goethe to Lavater shortly after the death of her only daughter, Cornelia, and well exhibits the serious, tender and religious side of her character:

FRAU RATH TO LOUISA NICOLOVUS AND HUSBAND.

FRANKFORT, the 23d June, 1777.

"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." His word shall surely stand. Now living, present witnesses are we, who know that our Cornelia, our only daughter, is now in the grave; and indeed, wholly unexpectedly; the flash and the stroke were one. O dear Lavater! The poor mother had much, much to bear. My husband had been ill the whole winter—the careless shutting of a door would startle him—and to him I had to be the messenger of the death of his daughter, whom he loved above everything. My heart was as if crushed; but the thought, "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" sustained me, so that I did not sink under my grief. Without a belief, as firm as a rock in God, the God who numbers the hairs of the head, without whom no sparrow falls; who neither slumbers nor sleeps, who is never gone on a journey, who knows the thought of my heart before it is formed; who hears me without my having need to tell myself with knives and lancets till the blood gushes out; who, in one word, is love—without belief in Him it would be impossible to bear any such thing. Truly man feels his own weak nature. Paul says, No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous; but it is one thing to feel another to be discontented with God's leading, and to put one's self in the place of those who have no hope. But we who know that beyond the grave-world's immortality, and that our life, which is but a span long may also be at its end—until it becomes to kiss the hand that chastens us, and to say (truly with a thousand thanks) accept good counsel. Well dear Hr. Gevatter, a thousand thanks once more for all your love, for your nice letters (with Louisa's inclosed), for the good, heart-rejoicing news, for the relation of your grandmother, for all that is dear and good, with which you have so many times delighted my heart. God reward you for it. Hold me dear; you live and flourish in the heart of her who is, and remains,

Your faithful grandmother and great-grandmother,

GOETHE.

P. S. My best thanks to the excellent Countess Stolberg, and no less to dear Aunt Jacob, for their love and friendship toward my Louisa. God bless them for it. I send the letter to Charlotte at once. Heaven! how she will cry for joy! She is a kind-hearted but singular creature; she cries for joy, she cries for grief; when it rains and when the sun shines; runs her eyes quite unnecessarily, and makes no face for the great-grandchild.

Dr. Gibbs's book contains three portraits of Goethe's mother, one of his father, one of his sister Cornelia, and one of Lavater, and the title page bears a picture of the Goethe house in Frankfort. The work is a valuable addition to the rather limited stock of Goethe literature accessible to readers who are shut out from the abundant German store by want of acquaintance with the German language.

THE ART-AMATEUR. A Monthly Journal devoted to the Cultivation of Art in the Household. Folio, 24 pp. New-York: MONTAGUE MACKIE, Editor and Proprietor.

This skilfully edited and handsomely ill-

illustrated journal well deserves to enter upon its second year of publication with a largely increased subscription-list, still growing in spite of the advance in price. Usefulness rather than show is the character of the illustrations, which, by their number and the extent of the field they range over, help the Editor's general purpose to make his journal a really good newspaper of the world of fine arts at home and abroad. To accomplish this, almost exclusive use is made of process-

published exclusively in the interest of art should use every opportunity, even the least, that occurs to it to add beauty and grace into the affairs of daily life. The designs for kettle-drum cards are as ugly as caricature and disagreeable suggestion can make them, whereas they should have reflected nothing but the beauty and grace of the ladies for whose use they are designed.

EXAMPLES OF HOUSEHOLD TASTE. By WALTER SMITH. State Director of the Massachusetts School of Design. Illustrated. Large octavo. \$21 pp. R. Worthington, New-York.

In this portly volume, the publisher has provided a ponderous text in which are thickly embedded several hundred wood-cuts of objects which for the most part were seen at the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia in 1876. A few, a very few, of the things here engraved are worth looking at a second time, for in general they belong to the class which the popular taste, greatly improved by the teachings of the last four years, would now consider hopelessly vulgar. Criticism of these monstrous travesties on the beauty and fitness of the designs that made the earlier ages illustrious, and which are enjoying a splendid revival in our own immediate time, would be impossible here, and would if attempted lead us over the whole field of the art of decoration. At a time when the efforts of every architect, sculptor, painter, carver of wood, worker in metal, modeller in clay, aided by every writer on art who has any real feeling for his business, are devoted with a cordial unanimity to teaching us by precept and example to seek for meaning, usefulness, fitness in our household furniture and utensils, and to embody these qualities in forms where grace, simplicity and beauty of line and color shall prevail, it is discouraging to see a name of such official authority as that of Mr. Walter Smith put to a volume whose multiplied illustrations, seen in mass, contradict and float every precept of every good artist and earnest art teacher of this day. The enemies of Mr. Smith may rejoice in this, but we shall not; we only much regret that he should have allowed himself to countenance such a project for the dissemination of bad taste and the encouragement of the too prevalent habit of spending money on loud and flashy articles of furniture. Mr. Walter Smith might have done us all a real service by selecting from these hundreds of ugly and offensive objects the few that are really good, and showing his readers why they were to be praised; they might have made the attractive illustration a discourse on good taste such as we have a right to expect now and then from a gentleman whose public position gives him an easy authority over ordinary writers on such subjects. But he has not cared to avail himself of his opportunity, and we must wait a while till some one of equal weight finds a publisher as ready and as able as Mr. Worthington to give his ideas a splendid dress.

ELISABETH GOETHE.

This quaint, affectionate and delightful epistle was written by Frau Goethe to her granddaughter, Louisa Nicolovus and her husband on the occasion of the birth of their first child:

FRAU RATH TO LOUISA NICOLOVUS AND HUSBAND.

The 5th April, 1796.

Now all thank God, with heart, mouth, and hands who doeth great things. Yes, indeed, to you, to me, to us all has He, anew, manifested himself as He who is good, and whose goodness endureth forever. Blessed be His Holy name. Amen. Dear children, God bless you in your new relation! The name of father and mother is honorable. Oh, what joys await you; and fortunate little boy, to enjoy being brought up by such excellent parents and grandparents! How carefully my little darling, whether he be cherished in body and soul; how early will good be seen in thy heart; how soon everything be noted on which might mar the beautiful image of God which thou bearest in thee! Then will increase in stature, wisdom and favor with God and man. Thy great-grandmother can contribute nothing to all this good; the distance is too great. Be glad, dear John George Edward, the great-grandmother cannot bring up children; is not at all suited to it—does everything they wish when they cry or make wry faces, without understanding into the reason why they laugh, why they cry; but I will love thee, heartily rejoice in thee, remember thee much and often, before God, gives me thy great-grandmother's blessing—yes, this I can and will do. Now I have plainly told the young citizen of the world what he has to expect from me: next, a few words with you, my dear grown children. My best thanks for your so dear and precious letters; they are always grateful as a mere greater discourse through the medium of electric light than by day or gas light. The sensation of color was increased sixty-fold compared to daylight, of red six fold, and of green and blue about two fold. Eyes that could only with difficulty perceive and distinguish colors by daylight or gas-light were much aided by the electric light, and the visual perception was also much strengthened. Professor Cohn concurred, therefore, in view of this fact, that the electric light would prove exceedingly useful in places where it was desirable that signals should be observable at a great distance. The engine employed in these experiments was a Gramme electro-magnetic apparatus, which rotates 600 times in a minute.

EFFECT OF THE ELECTRIC LIGHT ON VISION.

Professor Cohn, of Breslau, has been lately making some experiments with the electric light on the eyes of a number of persons, for the purpose of testing its specific influence, in different cases, on visual perception and the sensation of color. Among the interesting results of these investigations may be mentioned the fact that letters, spots and colors are perceived as much greater distance through the medium of electric light than by day or gas light.

The sensation of color was increased sixty-fold compared to daylight, of red six fold, and of green and blue about two fold. Eyes that could only with difficulty perceive and distinguish colors by daylight or gas-light were much aided by the electric light, and the visual perception was also much strengthened. Professor Cohn concurred, therefore, in view of this fact, that the electric light would prove exceedingly useful in places where it was desirable that signals should be observable at a great distance. The engine employed in these experiments was a Gramme electro-magnetic apparatus, which rotates 600 times in a minute.

INNOCENT COLORED FASHION PAPERMACHE.

from PARIS, comprising 15 LITHOGR. and 5 CHILDREN'S PAPERS, with 100 PICTURES. Also a BEAUTIFUL DESIGN FOR SOFA CUSHION in BERLIN WORK. Also a gigantic supplement of 100 PAPERS, showing all the Latest Fashions for Ladies and Children, with CUT OUT PATTERNS. ALSO MUSIC, POETRY, ETC., ETC.

Opinions of the Press.

"The Journal will be found useful by all the fair sex who have availed themselves of the taste and needs of feminine readers."—Boston Journal. "It will prove especially acceptable to our lady readers."—Ladies' Gazette. "Everyone can understand why this liberally conducted magazine is such a favorite everywhere."—New-York Evening Mail. "It is no masterpiece of fashion, but it is a valuable collection of choice and original designs, and that is what with this in the variety and interest of its contents, I would be hard to get so much for one's money in any other shape."—Philadelphia North American.

The Young Ladies' Journal can be obtained from any book or news dealer, by sending for the supplement, 35 cents postage. Yearly subscription (thirteen numbers), including the EXTRA CHRISTMAS number, \$4.00.

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS COMPANY, 31 Beckman-st., New-York.

AN APPROPRIATE HOLIDAY GIFT.—"Twain You and Me." A volume of sketches (original and gay). By ELIJAH HALL. Mrs. Charles L. Terry. Price \$1. For sale by C. T. DILLINGHAM.

FOR CHILDREN.—Dr. Foote's "Science in Story"; humorous and instructive. 5 vols., \$5. all in one. \$2. Murray Hill Publishing Company, 129 East 25th-st.

** CLEMS OF ENGLISH SONG."

A SOLID SUCCESS. sells by thousands, and contains over 80 choice songs. \$1.00. DUTSON & CO., Publishers, 843 Broadway, New-York.

INTERESTING, Piquant and Pertinent!

THE AMERICAN CODE OF MANNERS, JUST PUBLISHED.

is the most valuable book of etiquette that has been published for years. Every page is studded with judicious hits at errors in good manners.

The AMERICAN CODE OF MANNERS is not a dry

A TALK WITH LOUIS BLANC.

Paris Letter to The Sacramento Record-Union.

When I asked the concierge for M. Louis Blanc he directed me to a flight of stairs and told me to climb up to the very last story. I had mounted five flights, when I found myself in a room of two story-basements and a single room opened to me, and before I could say a word he was gone. On the right eye was amputated, and the left ear deaf; so that when the left eye was bound up and the right ear stopped there was no further avenue of stimulus to the patient's brain. When the latter experiment was actually carried out, the patient in about five minutes sank into a deep sleep, from which he only could be roused by tap stimuli to the ear of the remaining eye, but he could not by any means move. When the patient was left to himself he awoke in the course of the day, after many hours of sleep, either through internal stimuli, or from the excitation of the brain system through silent and unavoidable stimuli from without. The case seems to be, in some respects, without a parallel.

It is curious to think of a whole religious organization dosed, drenched, and in all ways medicinally treated according to